BIOS

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Public Participation in EA Panels

The West Coast Environmental Law Centre recently released a qualitative overview of the role of public participation in the review panel process under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). **TIME WELL SPENT? A Survey of Public Participation in Federal Environmental Assessment Panels** by Susan Rutherford and Karen Campbell assessed the experience of public participation in review panels, and made recommendations to strengthen the role of the public in environmental assessment panels.

"the public ... had a positive impact on the outcome of the EA"

Is public participation in CEAA hearings worthwhile? The authors believe the answer is a qualified yes. Their overall impression is that the role of the public in review panels has had a positive impact on the outcome of the EA. Public concerns and ideas were reflected in panel deliberations and recommendations, thereby having an indirect effect on federal decision-making. Additionally, in several instances public concerns and ideas had a direct impact, evidenced by proponents changing and improving their plans for project implementation.

The authors identified numerous impediments to ensuring effective public participation in CEAA review panels. Limits on participant funding, poorly developed processes with short timelines, and narrow project scope are some of the factors that cause challenges for the public. Finally, one of the biggest factors influencing the quality of public participation in hearings is the personal commitment and genuine concern of the individuals who are representing interests other than government or industry.

The CEA Act purposes are to: ensure that environmental impacts are considered before actions are taken; encourage actions that promote sustainable development; avoid duplication; and provide opportunities for public participation. There are four levels of assessments, each one increasingly more rigorous: screenings, comprehensive studies, review panels and mediation.

The vast majority of EAs are conducted by way of screening; few end up being subjected to a review panel. Because of the way the Act is triggered, large projects are not necessarily subjected to a more rigorous assessment. A review of experience with federal EA indicates that over 99.9 percent of the twenty-five thousand federal EAs conducted between 1995 and 2000 were screenings; only forty-six projects were subjected to comprehensive studies, ten projects were reviewed by panels that held public hearings, and no projects were referred to mediation.

The amount of participant funding in the first 5 years of CEAA totalled $840,046 or about 0.5 percent of

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BIOS is written for the enjoyment of the members of the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists and those interested in the field of professional biology. Articles or comments are welcomed and should be communicated to the ASPB Office. Editing and layout by Gavin More, 49 NORTH Creative Learning and Training.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Regular Member:

Jauna Anstett, David Brescia, Michael Bryski, Jennifer Douglas, Andrew Edeburn, Joel Heese, Andrea Hoyt, Jack Love, Michelle MacDonald, Scott Stoklosar, Jocelyn Thrasher-Haug, Greg Wagner, Ronald Zurawell

Biologist In Training:

Amy Folden, Bhandary Kularaj, Kelsey Miller, Samuel Ogali, Steffen Spoelstra, Ian Walker

Membership Update

ASPB membership as of April 1, 2004: **Total 558**

Regular	456	Biologist in Training	60
Honorary	7	Temporary Withdrawn	20
Student	7	Public Member	1
Associated	7		

Registration Committee

During the past year the Registration Committee (RC) reviewed 107 applications for membership in the ASPB. Thirty-five Professional Biologists, 18 Biologists-in-Training and 2 Students were approved while 28 applications for P.Biol. were refused based on lack of experience in the practice of biology, 20 applications were rejected based on inadequate academic credentials, and 4 applications were deferred pending receipt of transcripts.

The revised By-Laws clarified membership categories in the ASPB and the ramifications of allowing your P. Biol. designation to lapse. With the exception of the Temporary Withdrawn Biologist designation, which allows for a two-year fee-reduced hiatus from the Professional Biologist designation, any Professional Biologist that allows their membership to lapse will have to re-apply to be reinstated.

The Registration Committee is continually working towards more consistent and objective assessment of applications. With the increasing number of biological academic programs and the diversity of biological practice within Alberta and Canada this is no easy task. However the RC is committed to continuously updating and revising its assessment process to accommodate the changing nature of the profession of biology.

The new Professional Biologists Regulation is more flexible with regard to the size and composition of the RC. Interested ASPB members are invited to come forward and participate in the RC's deliberations.

Doug Collister P. Biol.

President's Message

The ASPB is facing new legislation that could dramatically affect our society. Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) is encouraging professional societies to think about updating their regulatory structure to ensure that their mandate appropriately reflects their needs. The Society must consider if we should move out from under the Professional & Occupational Associations Registration Act (POARA) and pursue the development of our own Act. To explore the pros and cons of this issue our Executive Director has attended a number of meetings with other societies and with Adrian Pritchard, the Acting Manager for Professions and Occupations of AHRE.

The Board met with Adrian on January 30th, 2004, to further investigate the pros and cons of our various options. AHRE has changed their thinking in the past few years and are considering more instruments for professional regulation. To help you follow discussions in the coming year and provide your input to the debate with greater clarity; the following describes some of the instruments of professional regulation:

Exclusive Scope of Practice - At present, Land Surveyors, APEGGA, Architects and Veterinarians in Alberta have exclusive scope of practice. The Alberta Government is encouraging a move toward only "restricted activities". When the Acts for these respective societies come up for renewal, there is a strong possibility that exclusive scope of practice may be altered to restricted activities. For example, medical doctors no longer are the exclusive practitioners of delivering babies or using hypodermics on people.

Restricted Activities - Applying for restricted activities for a profession does not exclude other professions from doing them, but protects the rights of your members to perform those activities. One issue to consider with this option is how to ensure we would not infringe on the rights of professionals, such as Environmental Scientists, who are not represented by a professional society, yet whose work heavily overlaps with ours.

Scope of Practice - The traditional delineating of scope of practice should be a task-based model of occupational regulation (rather than an occupation-based approach), in which tasks and services are regulated, rather than the practitioners.

Mandatory Registration - If mandatory registration were sought, any person practicing biology in the Province of Alberta must be a member of ASPB. A choice to pursue this route would require us to clearly define what practicing biology entails and we would have to re-look at our definition of what defines a Biologist. Given the challenges already facing our registrations committee we recognize that debating this issue will be highly complex.

Certification - A society, such as ASPB, has members who have met at least minimum academic qualifications, and minimum experience qualifications. These members are, therefore, certified. Societies are certified by government. A person is certified before becoming licensed.

Licensing - As in "Specialist Sign Off". A biologist, for example, will either take special courses, or challenge exams that will licence that person to do Specialist Sign Offs for oil and gas well-site reclamation. Only a few ASPB members will apply for and receive licensing status.

In addition to debating the appropriate instruments to define, if we chose to pursue our own Act, we will also be debating the following questions:

1. Should we cooperate to create an umbrella act for natural resources related professions, where each society would remain a distinct entity and have their own regulation?
2. Should we look to highly related professions to see if they are interested in either joining our Society (similar to the APEGGA model) or in forming related societies under the same umbrella act?
3. Should we look to creating designations for Biological Technicians?

In the coming year, the Board will be debating the issues of pursuing our own act and, if so, developing a plan to assess our needs and consult with our members and other stakeholders that may be affected. We encourage you to think about the issues and educate yourself on the pros and cons as we will be seeking your input.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to those who have put a great deal of effort in for our Society. So to the staff at Managewise, Executive Director Robin Leech, my fellow Directors and the many volunteers on our committees, let me extend my deepest thanks.

My thanks, also, to the members for offering me the opportunity for a year of challenging and humbling experiences. My best wishes for those who will follow in this role.

Teresa de Grosbois P. Biol.
President 2003/04

Bios Bits

SARA Consultation Underway

The 233 species currently listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) had been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and were found to be at risk at the time of the reintroduction of SARA (then known as Bill C-5), to the House of Commons on October 9th, 2002.

Since that time, COSEWIC has assessed or reassessed an additional 91 species as being at risk, making them eligible for consideration for addition to the SARA list. Sixty-three are included in a public consultation document by Environment Canada (EC) on the SARA Public Registry. The remaining 28 are aquatic species and are the subject of separate consultations being conducted by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

EC's public consultation ends May 14, 2004. You can view the consultation document at http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/public/Consultation%5Fe%2Epdf. Comments should be sent to the SARA Public Registry at SARAregistry@ec.gc.ca

Urban Sustainability Program

The National Round Table launched an initiative aimed at promoting the transformation of Canada's brownfields into vibrant centres of community life. The objective of the program was to develop a national strategy that incorporates federal, provincial, municipal and private sector measures that will facilitate the redevelopment of brownfields in Canada. The program's findings included 11 high-priority recommendations for immediate implementation, falling under four mutually supportive themes: getting the federal house in order; supporting the use of urban transit; promoting sustainable infrastructure; and encouraging the efficient use of energy and land. The strategy's recommendations address key barriers to brownfield redevelopment, including: legal uncertainty surrounding environmental liability, lack of capital, and poor stakeholder understanding of the issue. Cleaning up the Past, Building the Future: A National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy for Canada was released in February 2003. The final State of the Debate report entitled, Environmental Quality in Canadian Cities: The Federal Role, was released in May 2003.

http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/eng/programs/Current_Programs/Brownfields_Strategy/Brownfields_Strategy_e.htm

Brownfield Remediation Website

A new national network for Canadian brownfield remediation has been created.

www.aboutremediation.com/cbn/about_us.asp

New Reporting GHG Emissions

The Government of Canada has announced the start of mandatory reporting of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by Canada's major emitters on March 12, 2004. The announcement of the reporting requirements, set out in a Notice to be published March 13 in the Canada Gazette, follows close collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, as well as broad consultations with industry and other stakeholders.

In this first phase, only facilities that emit more than 100 kilotonnes of GHGs per year are required to report. This would include major industrial facilities that produce electricity, heat or steam using fossil fuels certain power generation facilities, for example, as well as integrated steel mills, facilities involved in smelting and refining metals, petroleum refineries, and chemical producers.

The federal, provincial and territorial governments will continue to collaborate in developing a harmonized, "single-window", domestic mandatory reporting system, and to implement it in orderly phases. This will help to ensure that a fully developed and tested system, that meets the reporting needs of all jurisdictions and the public, and minimizes burdens on both Canadian industry and governments alike, will be in place by the start of the first Kyoto Protocol commitment period between 2008 and 2012.

Reports for 2004 emissions will be due on June 1, 2005 and will be submitted to Statistics Canada.

Many of those affected by the new requirements already report their GHG emissions through mandatory or voluntary initiatives in a number of provinces. While Ontario already requires mandatory GHG reporting, and Alberta is expected to introduce a mandatory system soon, all jurisdictions will continue to collaborate in developing a single, harmonized, mandatory reporting system, and to implement this system in phases. Consultations on further development of a harmonized, "single-window", mandatory GHG reporting system will continue through federal-provincial-territorial management, with input from industry and other stakeholders.

Source: Environment Canada

www.ec.gc.ca/press/2004/040312_n_e.htm

Bios Bits

Weather-related Disasters in 2003

Environment Canada's top 10 weather stories for 2003 consisted of extreme weather events from coast to coast, all representing significantly different types of weather than Canada normally experiences. It's part of a global trend that made 2003 the third-warmest year since records began in 1861, according to the World Meteorological Organization. This year was the 11th consecutive one in Canada with higher temperatures than average [25 of the country's most recent 26 seasons have been warmer than average].

British Columbia experienced abnormal weather all year. It included 2,500 wildfires that forced 50,000 people to flee their homes over the summer, floods in autumn, freezing temperatures in November, and another flood in Vancouver in December. As 2003 began, parts of the coast and the southern interior of the province were in the middle of their worst drought in 100 years after the driest three-year period on record. Streams were running at just 10 to 20 per cent of their normal flows and were so "lethally warm" that salmon were suffocating; ground waters were dipping perilously low; and the Fraser River had one of its lowest peaks in 90 years of record-keeping. By mid-summer, little rain and stifling heat made conditions even drier. And when dry lightning and stiff winds hit, so did raging fires.

The second item was the spate of hurricanes that hit Canada, including hurricane Juan, which struck Halifax directly on Sept. 29, 2003 and tore up 100 million trees. It was the first time the eye of a hurricane had hit the city since 1893. In all, the Atlantic Ocean produced 16 intense tropical storms in 2003, including two in December; a first since 1887. The busy cyclone and hurricane season was primarily spurred by the higher-than-average ocean temperature.

The remaining items on the list include:

- severe winter in Eastern Canada from January to March;
- forest fires across the country that left an annual fire-fighting tab of almost $1-billion;
- entrenched drought on the Prairies and its attendant clouds of grasshoppers;
- a March downpour that flooded the four Atlantic provinces and became the most expensive weather disaster in the history of the Maritimes;
- a massive ice storm in New Brunswick in February that covered half the province with between 40 and 60 millimetres of frozen rain;
- deadly avalanches in the Rockies that killed 28 people, making it the second deadliest year for avalanches in nearly a century;
- heavy snow on Alberta in April and May, making it the snowiest spring on record for Edmonton and one of the worst in a century for Calgary; and
- the sheet of ice that entombed the town of Badger, Nfld., for a week in February, covering cars, trucks and homes with ice more than a metre thick.

Math And The Environment

The MITACS 5th Annual Conference will take place at Dalhousie University in Halifax from June 9 to 12, 2004. This year's theme is "Mathematics of Environment and Sustainable Resources". Mathematicians play an increasingly important role in researching and developing solutions for the environment and sustainable resources - from understanding natural variations in climate change and the spread of communicable diseases, developing new methods for preventing and managing invasions of insect pests, improving the durability and efficiency of fuel cells, to designing new seismic imaging techniques. The conference will bring together the best and the brightest in the mathematical sciences community to explore this topic.

Cumulative Environmental Effects in Court

In late 2003, the BC Supreme Court heard in the case of Apsassin v. BC Oil and Gas Commission and Vintage Energy Canada, Ltd. (Victoria, BCSC No. 03 3211). Chief Apsassin, representing himself and members of the Saulteau First Nation, was seeking a declaration that prior to approving a well authorization, the Commission is required to consult in good faith concerning the effects of the authorization for the purpose of avoiding infringement of the Saulteau's treaty rights.

The petition is unique in that it seeks a declaration that the Commission must have regard to the cumulative effects of all existing, proposed and reasonably foreseeable Crown authorized activities on the ability of the Saulteau First Nation to exercise its treaty rights, in accordance with their customs and practices. If such infringement cannot be avoided, the petitioner seeks a declaration ensuring that such infringement can be justified in accordance with section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982.

The Supreme Court has reserved judgement.

Public Participation continued

total federal expenditure on EA during this period. Legislative amendments enacted in 2003 has increased the federal government commitment to participant funding by making it available for comprehensive study level assessments. However, another legislative change states that once a comprehensive study track has been embarked upon, there is no possibility of referring the project to a panel review, regardless of the environmental implications. The authors believe that panels tend to be the best process available to facilitate the actual exchange of ideas on whether and how a project should be allowed to proceed but that they are not utilized often enough.

Review Panels

A review panel is required to hold public hearings and consider all of the factors identified in the Act, including the significance of the environmental effects of the project, the cumulative effects, mitigation measures, public comments. Since 1995, ten review panels have been concluded. The ten were:

- Express Pipeline Project [AB, gas pipeline] (report 1996);
- Terra Nova Development [NL, offshore petroleum] (report 1997);
- Sable Offshore Energy and Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline Projects [NS, offshore and onshore gas drilling/pipeline] (report 1997);
- Little Bow/Highwood Diversion Plan [AB, water diversion] (report 1998);
- Voisey's Bay Mine and Mill [NL, nickel mine] (report 1999);
- Cheviot Coal Mine Project [AB, coal] (report 2000);
- Sunshine Ski Development Project [AB, project withdrawn 2000);
- Canadian Millennium Pipeline Project [ON, project withdrawn 2001);
- Red Hill Creek Expressway Project [ON (court decision non CEAA 2001); and
- GSX Canada Pipeline Project [BC, gas pipeline] (report 2003).

Sometimes both provincial and federal EA legislation require an EA, though hearings are rare. Where there is concurrent jurisdiction, panels may be designated as joint federal-provincial EA review panels. Other federal authorities, such as the National Energy Board (NEB), also have overlapping jurisdiction to carry out an assessment of the environmental effects of a project.

Appropriately selected, impartial panel members who openly consider all of the evidence in their reports give everyone confidence in the process and the decisions. When key participant groups are allowed to give input into panel member selection, this increases public acceptance and confidence in the process. The most credible panel reports identified the participants and their comments; seriously discussed participant concerns; and tried to address concerns with concrete, detailed recommendations for change or accommodation.

Public Participation

The key benefits of in-person participation by the public identified by the authors include:

- communication of the values the community holds for the resource or area, and how the project will impact upon those values or affect them personally;
- provision of independent scientific research or traditional knowledge, regarding project impacts, wildlife species, habitat, ecology, and more; and be able to explain that knowledge to the panel;
- becoming educated about the process and the issues surrounding the project and the EA; and as a result of that participatory education, become more effective participants in the public consultation process; and
- being physically present and so bring pressure to bear upon the panels to ask the hard questions and to seek out any further or missing necessary information, research or evidence.

Considering the successes as well as some of the challenges in panel reviews, the authors believe that the federal government knows how to carry out effective consultations that are responsive to public input. The problem is that the know-how is not consistently applied when designing the consultation processes, and in responding to issues and problems. While there are successes, there remains room for both procedural and substantive improvements.

Adequate participant funding is needed to ensure that the public interest is well represented. Funding needs to be sufficient to allow groups to secure consultants with expertise in the environmental impacts of the particular industry in question, qualified to carry out their own research to assess and challenge the opinions of the proponent's expert. With funding in short supply, coordination and cooperation among participants maximizes the use of funding. The authors recommend the Agency improve advertising that funding is available and that groups encourage other groups to participate together.

An early, accessible consultation process and an inclusive agenda are key. Flexible, thoughtful and educational processes and materials increase accessibility and the effectiveness of the consultation. At the early "scoping" stage, when issues are gathered and processes are determined, appropriate and thorough public consultation is key to an effective EA process..

The authors list some diverse methodologies that may encourage inclusiveness and accessibility for the panel review process including:

- public notice through the use of advertisements, broadcasts and mailings (provided the notice is appropriately targeted);
- the use of websites for information or reference material, or 1-800 information lines;
- public consultation meetings for scoping issues, and defining the project, issues and process, including informational meetings and workshops;
- workshops/materials explaining the technical background of the project, in lay language;
- full public access to all information and materials related to the EA;
- courses on "How to be an intervenor" or "How to participate in a CEAA review panel";
- consultation on whether the environmental assessment provided is adequate;

ERRORS & OMISSIONS INSURANCE

When Alberta Environment issues its information on who and which associations will be permitted to do reclamation sign off, one of the first concerns for those engaged in reclamation sign off will be insurance, as a minimum. You would need a broker and the kind of insurance would be Professional Liability Insurance. There is very little chance for Errors & Omissions (E&O) Insurance because no two individuals or companies would be producing similar errors and/or omissions, so the insurance companies would have a hard time "getting a handle" on what to charge. I have contacted a number of sources and have summarized the information they have supplied below.

The College of Alberta Professional Foresters (CAPF) has spent a lot of time with brokers and insurers, but has been unsuccessful because of the diversity of risks amongst its members. CAPF encourages its members to carry E&O insurance (especially if self-employed individuals or consultants) but do not make it mandatory. Insurers look closely at the individual or company and weigh financial liabilities and risks before they make a quote. There is not as much "shopping around" as there used to be as some of the big insurers or brokers don't get into certain types of insurance coverage any more. The Canadian Institute of Forestry offers reasonable rates via brokers (see http://www.lms.ca).

The policy for Alberta Institure of Agrologists (AIA) is called AgrInsure with Marsh LMC Canada Ltd. in Ottawa Ontario (1-800-289-8803). The policy has two components: Professional Liability and E&O Liability Insurance. The main insurance concern for AIA members is reclamation sign off. The record for claims against AIA members in Alberta is nil, but in Ontario it is high. This may be the best company for ASPB members to check further, and to start in.

If you are interested in Marsh LMC, please call me. My contact prefers to have me call him with 25 names rather than have 25 people contact him individually. On the basis of the number of individuals who are interested, he will set up a program for ASPB members.

Robin Leech, P.Biol.
Executive Director

Public Participation concluded

- multiple phases to a consultation over time, or multiple hearings, at various locations, and in smaller communities and urban centres, including a schedule with "after-hours" sittings or video-conferencing;
- some informal hearings, not just a quasi-judicial process;
- translation services if needed;
- facilitation or use of demonstrative evidence or "views", where appropriate; and
- invitation/opportunity to comment on the process and whether it was effective and accessible.

Public influence over project decisions has been both direct and indirect: direct, when the public persuaded the proponents themselves to make changes; and indirect, when public influence on decision-makers was communicated via panel recommendations. Even in those cases where change was not necessarily effected, the process fostered the exchange of information, the identification of issues and a public discourse. The discourse afforded by a panel review process is unique, and likely not replicated in comprehensive studies or in screenings. The authors believe that panels are not utilized often enough, as they are often the best process available to facilitate the actual exchange of ideas on whether and how a project should be allowed to proceed.

When making recommendations, panels need not limit themselves to ensuring bottom-level regulatory compliance. The EA process strives to go further than that: its purpose is to identify issues and problems; come up with alternatives and creative solutions; and to plan appropriately, for more environmentally sound and socially acceptable results.

The authors recommend a number of means for the public to become more effective. Participants can learn from others how to make participation most effective. Participants can find someone who is intimately familiar with the industry who can point them to the industry's everyday impacts as well as any "games" that get played out onsite. When providing comments, participants should guard against generalities and hypotheticals. Similarly, participants should make specific requests and recommendations that the panel can adopt in ready-made form.

Often, many of the recommendations of a review panel pertain to follow-up and monitoring once the EA has been completed. Independent follow-up and monitoring of project operations helps to ensure and reassure the public that commitments are being met and impacts are being monitored, as operations move forward and repeat. The authors suggest that groups ask panels to recommend the establishment of an independent watchdog to monitor and report publicly on the proponent's implementation of the project and conditions to the approval.

Source: Extracted from TIME WELL SPENT? A Survey of Public Participation in Federal Environmental Assessment Panels.

For this report and a variety of other reports visit the West Coast Environmental Law Centre's website at:

www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2004/14097.pdf

National Round Table Reports

Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy was established in 1994. Its membership reflects a diversity of Canadian interests, including industry and environment groups. Appointed by the Prime Minister, the Round Table provides decision-makers with information supporting a sustainable environment and economy.

Working in close collaboration with Statistics Canada and Environment Canada, the National Round Table has developed six proposed new formal economic measures or indicators. The Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (ESDI) Initiative was a three-year multi-stakeholder program aimed at developing a small set of credible and understandable indicators to track whether Canada's current economic activities threaten the way of life for future generations. These indicators will augment familiar economic data such as gross domestic product (GDP) and the consumer price index (CPI).

The ESDI Initiative's final State of the Debate report, entitled "**Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators for Canada**", includes the findings and recommendations from extensive research and multi-stakeholder consultation. Five of the recommended indicators measure Canada's natural capital - measuring trends in forest cover, freshwater quality, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and the extent of wetlands. The sixth indicator measures educational attainment.

In the February 2004 Speech from the Throne, the federal government made a commitment to begin using several of the recommended indicators. Governor General Adrienne Clarkson announced that "... building on the recommendations of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, the Government will start incorporating key indicators on clean water, clean air and emissions reductions into its decision making."

To download visit www.nrtee-trnee.ca/eng/programs/Current_Programs/SDIndicators/ESDI-Report/ESDI-Report_IntroPage_E.htm

Securing Canada's Natural Capital

Parks and protected areas are reservoirs of natural capital, including environmental services like clean water and pollination, and environmental goods such as lumber and DNA according to the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy in its report entitled **Securing Canada's Natural Capital: A Vision for Nature Conservation in the 21st Century** [download at www.nrtee-trnee.ca/]. They are the basic building blocks of conservation, but by themselves are not enough.

The realization that nature is valuable natural capital has created 'a new economic case for nature conservation'. Much of the conservation of natural capital should take place on Canada's working landscapes where agricultural, logging and mining industries operate. While continuing economic development opportunities, we need to create buffer zones and connecting corridors in the working landscapes around parks and protected areas to adequately conserve our stocks of natural capital, including our biodiversity wealth. To encourage Canadians to steward natural capital, **Securing Canada's Natural Capital** recommends that the Federal Government:

* Develop a national sustainable tourism strategy to enhance the economic benefits to communities near protected areas.
* Give Aboriginal peoples preferential access to business opportunities near protected areas in their traditional lands.
* Provide accelerated capital cost tax allowances, and cost-sharing to farmers who invest in conservation equipment such as manure management facilities; and give premium agricultural support benefits to farmers who operate under an Environmental Farm Plan.
* Allocate $250 million to start a National Conservation Fund to support conservation projects. Other players such as provincial governments and conservation NGOs should match the Federal contribution 3:1 to create a billion-dollar fund.
* Create a national electronic biodiversity information network with standard classifications of terrestrial and aquatic species, and a nationally coordinated community monitoring network.
* Complete a network of 35 Marine Protected Areas, marine conservation areas and marine wildlife areas by 2010.
* Allocate an additional $475 million for new National Parks and expand the network of wildlife areas and bird sanctuaries.